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AUTHOR Tollefson, Terrence A.
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a few of the more important national characteristics of community colleges and state community college systems, the latter in three "snapshots" taken at different times in the 20th century. This paper is divided into the following topics of discussion: state coordination and governance structures, mission evolution, and state funding and state control. This paper begins the historical narrative of the community college system national "movement" with a discussion of S. V. Martorana's 1963 first national study of state systems of community colleges. By the late 1990s, five models of state-level coordination/governance had emerged: State Board of Education, State Higher Education Board or Commission, Statewide Community College Coordinating Board, State Community College Governing Board, and State Board of Regents. In the past decade, economic and workforce development have emerged as high-priority community college functions that rival college-transfer and vocation-technical commission components in importance in many states. Today, in terms of actual decision making, "local autonomy is alive and well...in state community college systems." Included at the end of this paper is a table of changes in state-level coordinating structures for public junior and community colleges from 1963-1999. (Contains 28 references.) (VWC)

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MARTORANA'S LEGACY: RESEARCH ON STATE SYSTEMS OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Terrence A. Tollefson
East Tennessee State University

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OVERVIEW

Each American state has its own unique community college system with its own individual history. The origin, spectacular growth and evolution of public two-year colleges from an extension of one high school in Illinois in 1901 to over a thousand separate institutions in 1999 came about in part because of a national "movement" with great national leaders, and in part because of strong leadership within each state's educational and political systems. This brief paper describes a few of the more important national characteristics of community colleges and state community college systems, the latter in three "snapshots" taken at different times in the twentieth century.

Cohen and Brawer said that the two most important characteristics of community college students were "number and variety"(p.39). Numbers of students and other features may illustrate the end-of-the-century importance of community colleges in the larger postsecondary educational context. The headcount enrollment in public community colleges exceeded 5.5 million students in the fall of 1996, which was approximately 36% of the 15.2 million students enrolled in all public and private institutions of higher education in the U.S. Current fund revenues for all higher education institutions nationally totaled $123.5 billion in fiscal year 1996. The community college portion was $22.5 billion, for about 18% of the total for all public and private institutions (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999). All 50 states have public two-year institutions that satisfy Cohen and Brawer's (1996) definition of a community

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college, and each state government exercises some degree of state-level control over community colleges through one or more state boards, commissions and/or agencies (Tollefson; in Tollefson, Garrett and Ingram, 1999).

The primary sources of information for this paper are three books on state community college systems that were co-authored and co-edited, respectively, by Fountain and Tollefson (1989); Tollefson and Fountain (1992); and Tollefson, Garrett and Ingram (1999). Most chapters on state community college systems were written by state directors or members of their staffs, based upon guidelines developed by the co-editors.

STATE COORDINATION AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

S.V."Marty" Martorana's 1963 study (cited in Blocker, Plummer and Richardson;1965) was the first national study of state systems of community colleges that came to my attention after I became the state director of community colleges in New Jersey in 1969, and it was very useful to me. Martorana's study reported that public two-year colleges had been established in 38 states, and that each state had assigned the authority and responsibility for "supervision and coordination of junior colleges" to some state board, agency, or individual (i.e., the state superintendent of schools). In 26 states , state boards, state departments and/or state superintendents of education were given that role. State boards of higher education or state university boards were responsible for junior college oversight in 12 states, and six states had established separate state junior college boards or commissions. Then, as now, some states had more than one state agency or board with some authority over junior colleges.

Robert Berdahl in 1971 reported that statewide coordination of public senior institutions of higher education could be classified for each state as having: (1) neither a statutory statewide agency nor a voluntary one for coordinating higher education; (2) voluntary and somewhat formal statewide coordination; (3) a statewide higher education coordinating board that had not

replaced the individual institutional governing boards; or (4) a single statewide governing board. He found that two states had no voluntary or other coordinating organizations, two had voluntary coordination, 27 employed state-level coordinating boards, and 19 states had "consolidated governing boards" (Berdahl, 1971). The classifications of Martorana and Berdahl have been modified for purposes of this report.

Approximately a decade ago, only one state reported no two-year colleges, and only nine state community college systems were still coordinated by state boards and departments of education, whereas 21 states used state boards of regents or higher education for this purpose, and 22 states had state boards or commissions for community colleges and/or two-year technical institutions (Fountain and Tollefson, 1989; Reinhard, Wisniewski, Ronita and Jiminez, 1989; Tollefson and Fountain, 1992). It should be noted that some state boards for community colleges and/or postsecondary vocational-technical institutions are not shown in the chart for any of the three time periods, nor are they acknowledged in the discussion. The reason is that state community college directors or other authors in some states have omitted identification of other boards, commissions or agencies for other two-year postsecondary systems.

By the late 1990s, all 50 states had public two-year colleges, and each state had at least one state board or commission that provided coordination or governance for them. Ten states exercised some community college coordination through K-12 state education boards, 21 state systems were coordinated or governed by state boards of regents or boards of higher education, and 24 states had separate state boards or commissions for community colleges. (Tollefson and Patton, 1998; Tollefson; in Tollefson, Garrett and Ingram, 1999). Several states currently have more than one state-level board or commission with overlapping authority over the same system of community colleges. As one example, the Tennessee Board of Regents governs the community colleges in that state, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission provides

coordination for the community colleges in such areas as budget recommendations to the governor and legislature and curriculum approval (Phillips-Madson and Malo; in Tollefson, Garrett and Ingram, 1999). In other states, there are two or more state-level entities with coordination/governance authority over two systems of public postsecondary institutions. An example of this model is Texas, where the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board coordinates the community colleges and the Texas State Technical College System has its own governing board (Barron and Heckman; in Tollefson, Garrett and Ingram, 1999). As of 1997, 18 states had organized postsecondary technical institutes separately from community colleges, including Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota [which has no institutions called community colleges], Texas, Utah and West Virginia (Education Commission of the States, 1997). By the late 1990s, five models of state-level coordination/governance had emerged. They are described below in terms of their principal characteristics and the states that represented each model. (Tollefson and Patton, 1998; Tollefson; in Tollefson, Garrett and Ingram, 1999).

1. State Board of Education: Alabama, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Oregon and Pennsylvania. State boards of education typically exercise only minimal control over community colleges, and they do so mainly in states with relatively autonomous community college boards of trustees.
2. State Higher Education Board or Commission: Arkansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York (SUNY), Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas. This model typically is employed in states with local community college governing boards. These state boards or commissions often have authority to

approve degree programs and recommend state legislative community college appropriations priorities.

3. Statewide Community College Coordinating Board: California, Colorado (for local district colleges), Florida, Michigan, Mississippi, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Such boards generally exercise a moderate degree of control over community colleges, particularly regarding their financial and academic operations.
4. State Community College Governing Board: Colorado (for state-system colleges), Delaware, Kentucky, Maine and Minnesota. Such governing boards appoint and terminate presidents, faculty and staff; approve academic programs and budgets; hold title to land, buildings and equipment; establish systemwide community college policies regarding employment, salaries and benefits of employees; and they usually can sue and sometimes can be sued
5. State Board of Regents: Alaska, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Montana, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, and West Virginia. Such boards characteristically have strong authority to govern both community colleges and state universities.

MISSION EVOLUTION

The appropriateness of various educational functions and processes and their desired relative priorities have been debated from the first decade of the twentieth century to the present. Frye (1992) said, "One is hard pressed to establish an unambiguous purpose for the first public junior college at Joliet, Illinois, or elsewhere" (p.1). Contemporary writers who have expressed similar views include Cohen and Brawer, Deegan and Tillery, Parnell, and Vaughan (cited in Frye, 1992). Frye's analysis of the literature written by national junior college leaders from 1900 to 1940 revealed a shift in emphasis from the college-transfer function from 1900 to 1920 to the "terminal" functions of vocational education and general education, which continued for the

following 20 years. Although the word "terminal" has been applied only rarely to community college courses and programs in recent decades, the debate continues regarding the community colleges' appropriate respective emphases upon college transfer, vocational-technical, remedial/developmental and continuing education programs, and sometimes of community services activities as well (Breneman and Nelson, 1981; Brint and Karabel, 1989; Cohen and Brawer, 1996).

Thornburg (1988), in his national study of state policymakers and administrators, reported that general agreement existed on the following community college mission components, in descending order of importance:

1. Providing courses and associate degree programs to students college age or older;
2. Providing vocational training and preparation for entry-level jobs for individuals college age or older;
3. Providing instruction in basic skills;
4. Providing special services to attract students with high academic ability;
5. Providing special support for minority groups to assist them in benefiting from college programs;
6. Sponsoring student activities to complement the educational program;
7. Providing facilities and services for local community and business groups as a community service;
8. Providing special assistance and programs for mentally and physically handicapped students;
9. Providing general interest courses and other activities for senior citizens and other community members;
10. Providing credit courses and programs for non-high school graduates;

11. Providing credit courses for high school students; and

12. Providing facilities and services for students who are not residents of the local community to allow them to attend college [p.85 (numbers and punctuation added)].

Cohen and Brawer (1996, pp.21-23) listed the following characteristic "curricular functions" of community colleges: academic transfer, vocational-technical, continuing education, remedial (developmental) education. They also included community service as a function. In the past decade, economic development and workforce development have emerged as high-priority community college functions that rival college-transfer and vocational-technical mission components in importance in many states (Campbell; in Hoffman and Julius, 1994; Tollefson, 1994; Grubb, 1997; and Ingram; in Tollefson, Garrett and Ingram, 1999).

STATE FUNDING AND STATE CONTROL

State funding for community college operations in the United States increased from zero percent of the total in 1918 to 28% in 1942, to 60% in 1980, and then declined to 46% in 1992 (Starak and Hughes, 1954; Medsker and Tillery, 1971; National Center for Education Statistics, 1994; cited in Cohen and Brawer, 1996). The state share declined still further to 39% of the total in 1995 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997; cited in American Association of Community Colleges, 1998). State control has demonstrably increased from the earliest days of the existence of public junior colleges, and numerous authors have contended that state control increased along with state dollars (Wattenbarger and Tillery, 1985; cited in Cohen and Brawer, 1996). State appropriations for public community colleges totaled slightly over $8.0 billion in fiscal year 1996-97 (Hines and Higham, 1997).

The first state legislation reported in the national literature as authorizing two years of education beyond high school was California's 1907 Upward Extension Law, consisting of a

single paragraph (California State Department of Education, 1928; cited in Witt, Wattenberger, Gollatscheck & Suppiger; 1994). A second California law was passed by both houses of the legislature in 1909, but was vetoed by the governor. It would have authorized state funding for high school districts to establish junior college programs. The Ballard Act of 1917 authorized financial support of California public junior colleges from both the state and the counties, with amounts to be provided on a per-student basis at the same rates as those for high schools. The Ballard Act "required school districts to have taxable property valued at $3 million before new public junior colleges could be organized"(Witt et al., 1994, p. 38).

It probably is not coincidental that the first state law that authorized state funding for public junior colleges also appears to have been the first state law that explicitly specified requirements for establishing new junior colleges. Many authors have observed an apparent relationship between state funding and state control of community colleges. Among them are Arney(1969); Monroe(1975); Martorana, Wattenbarger and Smuts(1978); and Kintzer(1980); (cited in Fonte, 1993). Fonte's 1993 report suggested that states needed to reduce regulation of local community colleges to enable them to facilitate economic development goals.

A 1990 report by Honeyman, Williamson, and Wattenbarger said "...those involved in the legislative process increasingly make decisions regarding the financing of community colleges that contradict the philosophical basis of the community college. Such decisions hamper colleges from accomplishing their traditional mission" (p. vii). Based on a national study, Garrett (1993) concluded:

> The level of funding provided by the primary revenue sources appears to have definite implications for the control of local campuses. The finding that a high percentage of state funding (over 50%) is associated with centralized governance structures supports the contentions of other authors who assert that the level of financial contribution correlates with the level of control. The implication of this finding is that where shifts in funding occur, specifically to a greater proportion of state funding, a likely consequence will be a shift to greater state control (p. 13).

Garrett conducted a national follow-up study in 1997 (in Tollefson, Garrett and Ingram,(1999). His similar conclusion was:

> Once again, the data show that the level of funding by funding source determines whether the state or local board controls local campuses. In particular, it was determined that the percentage of state funding was associated with degree of centralization, where the proportion of state funding increases with increases in centralization of governance structures. With a significant decrease in the proportion of state funding identified in 1997, one might expect to find a corresponding decrease in degree of centralization. However, there were no significant differences between the centralization indexes [of the two studies] (p. 9).

Ingram and Tollefson (1996) found that, in terms of *actual* decision making, "local autonomy is alive and well…in state community college systems"(p133). Their national study employed an authorized slight modification of a1982 study by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. In 1993, surveys were sent to the 49 state community college state directors, and their useable response rate was 83.7% (41 of 49 states). The state directors were asked to respond on a five-category Likert-type scale to 36 items, each of which described a type of decision that represented one of three larger categories: academic, personnel, or administration. They concluded:

> The results of this study indicate that heads of state community college systems perceive the location of effective decision making in community colleges in their states to be at the local level…and did so for all types of governance decisions…a possible explanation may be found in the distinction drawn here between *effective* decision making authority [local-level] and *formal* [state-level] decision making authority (pp. 143, 148).

In other words, authority effectively was delegated to the local campus level, and most decisions were "rubber stamped" at the state level. Ingram and Tollefson (1996) indicated an alternative explanation, which was that state directors might have reported there was more local-level decision making than local presidents would have if they had been surveyed.

"Marty" Martorana was not the first person to write about state systems of community colleges, but he was a prolific author in this area as well as many others in postsecondary education. When I first met him, he was the vice chancellor for two-year colleges for the State

University of New York system. As a fledgling state director, I was influenced by Marty's example of conducting, synthesizing, and publishing national research as a basis for recommending state-level decisions in his own state, and perhaps for influencing decisions in other states'community college systems as well. The multitude of published documents about state community college systems in recent years represents part of the legacy Marty left. We are all in his debt.

Changes in State-Level Coordinating Structures for Public Junior and Community Colleges, 1963 to 1999

State	1963				1989				1999			
	None	K-12	BR/HE	BC/JC	None	K-12	BR/HE	BC/JC	None	K-12	BR/HE	BC/JC
Alabama	X					X		X		X		X
Alaska			X				X				X	
Arizona				X				X				X
Arkansas	X						X				X	
California		X						X				X
Colorado		X						X				X
Connecticut		X						X				X
Delaware	X							X				X
Florida		X				X		X		X		X
Georgia			X			X	X			X	X	X
Hawaii	X						X				X	
Idaho		X				X				X		
Illinois		X						X				
Indiana	X						X				X	X
Iowa		X	X			X				X		
Kansas		X				X				X		
Kentucky			X				X					X
Louisiana		X					X					X
Maine	X							X				X
Maryland		X						X			X	
Massachusetts				X			X				X	
Michigan		X				X				X		
Minnesota		X						X			X	
Mississippi				X				X				X
Missouri		X					X				X	
Montana		X					X				X	
Nebraska		X		X			X				X	
Nevada	X						X				X	
New Hampshire		X						X				X
New Jersey		X					X				X	
New Mexico			X				X				X	
New York			X				X				X	
North Carolina			X					X				X
North Dakota		X	X				X				X	
Ohio			X	X			X				X	
Oklahoma		X	X				X				X	
Oregon		X				X				X		
Pennsylvania	X					X				X		
Rhode Island			X					X				X
South Carolina		X						X				X
South Dakota	X				X					X		
Tennessee	X						X				X	
Texas		X					X				X	
Utah	X						X				X	
Vermont	X							X				X
Virginia	X							X				X
Washington		X						X				X
West Virginia		X	X					X				X
Wisconsin		X						X				X
Wyoming				X				X				X
Total Number of States	12	26	12	6	1	9	21	22	0	10	21	24

"None" means there is no state-level agency, board or commission established to coordinate public two-year colleges.
"K-12" means the state-level coordinating structure for public junior or community colleges is the same one as the structure for public elementary and secondary education.
"BR/HE" means a university board of regents or a board or commission for higher education.
"BC/JC" means a board or commission for public junior, community, and/or vocational technical colleges.
Sources: Martorana; (1963) in Blocker, Plummer, & Richardson (1965); Fountain and Tollefson (1989); Reinhard, Wisniewski, & Jiminez (1989); Tollefson & Fountain (1992); Tollefson & Patton, 1998; Tollefson; in Tollefson, Garrett & Ingram (1999).

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